

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 FBOE-00 OC-05 CCO-00 OPR-02 SY-05

SCSE-00 PPTE-00 SCA-01 PA-02 PRS-01 USIE-00 SS-15

SSO-00 /043 W

----- 102376

O 042328Z APR 75 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7041

UNCLAS MEXICO 2911

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, ABLD, ASEC, ASUP, AFSP, MX

SUBJECT: FIRE IN U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL IN GUADALAJARA APRIL 2

REF: MEXICO'S 2886

1. INITIAL TECHNICAL INSPECTION CONSULATE GENERAL BUILDING GUADALAJARA INDICATES LAST NIGHT'S FIRE MAY HAVE BEEN STARTED BY FAULTY APECO REPRODUCTION MACHINE LOCATED IN AMERICAN SERVICE SECTION ON MAIN FLOOR. THE FIRE WAS OBVIOUSLY INTENSE BUT THE FLAME DAMAGE WAS GENERALLY LIMITED TO THAT IMMEDIATE SECTION. NEARBY AREAS SUFFERED HEAVY SMOKE DAMAGE AS WELL AS WATER DAMAGE RESULTING FROM FIREFIGHTING EFFORT. EVERY AREA OF THE BUILDING HAS BEEN MARRED BY SOOT AND SMOKE.

2. THE DAMAGE IN THE AMERICAN SERVICES SECTION IS WIDE SCALE. THE ENTIRE UNIT WILL HAVE TO BE REPLASTERED, SOME NEW DUCTS WILL BE REQUIRED, COMPLETE REWIRING IS ESSENTIAL, AND NEW FLOORS WILL BE MANDATORY. ALL FURNITURE, OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND GENERAL PARAPHENALIA IN THE UNIT HAS BEEN RENDERED USELESS.

3. FORTUNATELY, DESPITE INTENSE HEAT AT THE PEAK OF THE FIRE, WE HAVE NOT YET IDENTIFIED ANY MAJOR STRUCTURAL DAMAGE. THE FLOOR IMMEDIATELY ABOVE THE FIRE AREA SHOWS NO EVIDENCE OF BUCKLING OR OTHER STRUCTURAL FAULT.

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4. TELEPHONE SERVICE HAS BEEN RESTORED THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE BUILDING. HOWEVER, COMPLETE REWIRING AND NEW INSTRUMENTS WILL BE NEEDED IN THE AMERICAN SERVICES SECTION.

5. ALTHOUGH ELECTRIC POWER HAS NOT BEEN INTERRUPTED, WATER SERVICE HAS BEEN CUT OFF SINCE TWO PIPES BURST AS A RESULT OF HEAT AND ACCOUNTED, IN PART, FOR FLOOD IN FIRE AREA.

6. DAMAGE TO FURNISHINGS IN OTHER AREAS SEEMS MINIMAL. SOME REUPHOLSTERING MAY BE UNAVOIDABLE BUT A THOROUGH SCRUBBING DOWN IN MANY SECTORS WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO RESUME OPERATION ALTHOUGH COMPLETE REPAINTING THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING IS OBVIOUSLY REQUIRED.

7. CONSUL GENERAL ORTWEIN HAS THROUGHOUT THE DAY ENJOYED THE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT OF THE STAFF IN CLEANING UP AND MAKING ADJUSTMENTS PREPARATORY TO RENDERING PARTIAL SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC ON FRIDAY, APRIL 4, AND FULL SERVICE EFFECTIVE MONDAY, APRIL 7. A SPECIAL CLEANING DETAIL IS BEING MOUNTED FOR MAJOR EFFORT OVER THE WEEK-END. WHILE SOME MAKESHIFT OFFICES MUST BE ESTABLISHED THE WORK OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL WILL GO ON.

8. MARHNOS, THE OWNERS OF THE BUILDING, HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SITE AND AN AGENT OF THE INSURANCE COMPANY WHICH HAS INSURED THE BUILDING IS ALSO ON HAND FOR INVESTIGATION AND ESTIMATES. THE SPECIAL DETAIL OF FIVE EMBASSY OFFICERS ARE IN GUADALAJARA ASSISTING WITH THE ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFYING MATERIALS NEEDED TO RESTORE THE BUILDING TO NORMALCY. THE EMBASSY PLANS TO MAKE AVAILABLE ASSORTED PIECES OF FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT.

9. WHILE IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO MAKE MEANINGFUL ESTIMATES, IT IS OUR GUESS THAT THE BUILDING WILL ENTAIL SOME 25,000 DOLLARS TO EFFECT REPAIRS AND AN EQUAL AMOUNT WILL BE NEEDED TO REPLACE MACHINES, EQUIPMENT, OFFICE FURNISHINGS AND SUPPLIES.

10. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SOME FILES HAVE BEEN LOST AND OTHERS DAMAGED. AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF THIS ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM WILL REQUIRE SEVERAL DAYS TO COMPLETE.

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11. FULLER DETAILS WILL BE REPORTED AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE AND MORE ACCURATE FINANCIAL ESTIMATES WILL BE PROVIDED ASAP.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MEXICO02911
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750116-0230
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750481/aaaacvvy.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MEXICO'S 2886
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2003 by maginmm>; APPROVED <12 JAN 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FIRE IN U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL IN GUADALAJARA APRIL 2
TAGS: OGEN, ABLD, ASEC, ASUP, AFSP, MX
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006